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THE STUDY OF ECONOMIC GEOGRAPHY.¹

[Abstract.]

BY L. M. KEASBEY.

Though commonly considered separately, the two studies, economics and geography are rightly correlative. As it is, however, economists are content to generalize the data of geography, and geographers have seen fit to ignore the principles of economics.

The principles of economic geography must outline economic theory, showing how the general laws of demand are dependent upon the particular conditions of supply. Hence arises the necessity of Economic Geography, *i.e.*, a descriptive study of the natural resources of the earth, and their application, through the process of production, to the satisfaction of human wants.

Geographers, on their side, offer no systematic description of the phenomena of civilization. Failure of political, historical, commercial, and general geographies in this respect. Systematic geography is admirable as far as it goes, but it concludes with description of organic phenomena, or the animal world. There is further need for a systematic description of human development and of the spread of civilization. Economics is chosen as the point of departure for such a study, because the fundamental distinction between man and beast, between super-organic and organic phenomena, is economic in character. The new department of geography should, therefore, be called Economic Geography. Eco-

¹ Mr. Keasbey had made arrangements for the publication of his paper in the *Political Science Quarterly* before it was put upon the program of the American Economic Association, accordingly an abstract only is printed here.

conomic geography accordingly depends upon economics, describes super-organic phenomena, recognizes a utilitarian purpose in nature, and considers the world fitted for the ascendancy of civilization.

METHODS OF ECONOMIC GEOGRAPHY.

The earth may be divided into general and local environments. General environments influence human development directly and constitute ethnic types. Local environments affect human development indirectly and institute economic standards. General environments should be studied under the following heads: orography, hydrography, meteorography and chrematography, and then plotted off into local environments, *e.g.*, jungle environment, arctic environment, barren environment, forest environment, plain environment, oceanic island environment, desert oasis environment. The various local environments give rise to different productive activities, *e.g.*, hunting, fishing, root grubbing, root culture, herding, arboriculture, and agriculture which in turn institute corresponding economic systems, *e.g.*, domestic economy, tribal economy, clan economy, patriarchal economy, communal economy.

Having studied these economics separately and in isolation, we may show how, by conquest of agriculturist by pastoral people, the feudal economy is established. Next, how by growth of industry and commerce, feudal economy is transformed into the plutocratic economy. Finally, how by institution of mining and manufacture the plutocratic economy develops into the capitalistic economy. We may thus set forth geographic distinctions between eastern and western civilization, and outline economic development of western civilization from a geographic point of view.